



**CONGRESSMAN CURT WELDON**

*7th District Pennsylvania*



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**STATEMENT OF HONORABLE CURT WELDON  
CHAIRMAN, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE  
JOINT SESSION OF THE RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT AND MILITARY  
PROCUREMENT SUBCOMMITTEES  
AIR FORCE MODERNIZATION HEARING**

*March 10, 1998*

I thank my good friend and Chairman of the Military Procurement Subcommittee for his support and the support of his ranking member and members of the Procurement Subcommittee during our series of joint hearings on DOD modernization. Today's hearing on Air Force modernization offers yet another opportunity to examine the inconsistencies that continue to surface between the defense department characterizations of healthy and improving modernization budgets, and the long list of under funded service priorities needed to support the requirements of our men and women serving in the military.

I and my colleagues on the R&D Subcommittee are still concerned with 14% decline in overall R&D funding over the next five years. OSD officials maintain that this decline is not bad news because a number of major modernization programs are moving from demonstration and validation and manufacturing and development to the procurement stage. But as we found during our Army and Navy hearings, the Air Force also appears to have a number of major development programs such as Joint Strike Fighter, Airborne Laser, Space Based Laser, SBIRs high & low, as well as numerous system upgrades, that require large increases in R&D funds.

I am still seeking insight into how the services can successfully undergo the kind of sweeping transformation that DOD describes as critical for the military to perform its missions in the next century while they continue to experience steadily declining R&D budgets.

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